

"Farm Security is doing a good job here. But down South, Farm Security is nothing but bungling and confusion."

Ever heard that one? Of course, you have.

Down South, the skeptics and critics put it this way: "Farm Security is doing a good job in the South. But up North, FSA is nothing but bungling and confusion."

Actually, Farm Security has done a good job everywhere. And everything considered, it's done a pretty good job on every assignment handed it.

There was defense housing, for instance. When the shadow of war fell upon large areas of the world and we had to adjust to wartime production, Farm Security was handed the job of providing housing. It was the only agency in the Government with any emergency housing know-how. Of course, things went wrong. But housing sprang up overnight. Compare it with conditions today, when housing still is a problem. When farm labor was needed, Task Force FSA was told to get it, move it where it was needed, shelter and feed it. Despite the panicky complaints and fears of growers, FSA brought them their labor, enough (frequently too much) and on time (sometimes too early). So it was with cow-buying and assorted other responsibilities.

In the light of wartime and post-war boom days, our depression projects seem strange. But those who were on the spot and knew the hunger and need of depression-ridden projects will swear today that they were the greatest measures ever adopted by the Government. Should depression again darken our national economy, these devices may seem sound again.

The future of Farm Security now is being legislated in Washington. At this writing we cannot predict what type of legislation will result. But we do know that Congress has taken a long look at this agency. And, generally, Congress has found it good.

Conservative and progressive Republicans, Southern and Northern Democrats, representatives from all parts of the country and of all shades of political persuasion have said some nice things about Farm Security during recent hearings and debates.

Let's listen to a few remarks by Congressman----with emphasis on opinion outside our own region:

Rep. H. Carl Andersen, R., Minnesota, February 5, during hearing:

"...I reiterate what I mentioned here last year, and that was to the effect that I thought the Farm Security in my part of Minnesota was doing a fine job and that I had personally gone off on a tour and examined various projects, and I think they are doing wonderful work, and I want to keep them that way..."

Rep. Whitten, D., Mississippi, February 5, during hearing:

"...My observation is that in recent years there has been a great improvement in your work and a much greater acceptance by the public that it is good work, but just a very few years ago I have seen some of the most atrocious acts on the part of the Farm Security. Fortunately, that condition no longer exists, and I think you men in my area are now doing a good job..."

Rep. Tarver, D., Georgia, March 7 during House debate on Agriculture Appropriation Bill for 1947:

"...The program is now being conducted in a more practicable and common-sense way than in prior years and is being utilized principally in order to afford a much-needed measure of assistance to low-income farmers. Extravagances and impractical theories of former years have in the main been eliminated and we believe that under present administration further corrections in these particulars may be expected..."

"...The administrative personnel in the field, the farm supervisors, the home supervisors, who are endeavoring to aid these families who have these loans, are largely responsible for the very satisfactory rate of repayment which has been accomplished..."

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2 - What Congressmen Say About FSA

Rep. D'Ewart, R., Montana, March 7 during House debate:

"Does the gentlemen from Georgia feel that the appropriation for farm tenancy and water-facilities program are sufficient to take care of the veterans' needs during the coming year? In my district there are a great many veterans who are appealing to the Farm Security Administration for help in getting started in farm operations following this war." (Mr. Tarver replied that FSA was not a veterans' program; veterans should be aided under G. I. Bill).

Rep. Hand, R., New Jersey, March 7, extension of remarks:

"Mr. Speaker, in the early part of this year I had the pleasure to present to Staff Sgt. Andrew William Sinclair, Jr., an FSA check for \$6,500 which enabled him to buy a farm. I am advised that this was the first loan of its kind made in New Jersey, and I am particularly proud that it was done in Cumberland County in my district...Mr. Speaker, this loan will enable him to catch up because it was made on a businesslike basis. A committee of local farmers appraised the value of this farm as well as the ability of Sinclair to operate it. It is no service to veterans to help them get something they will not be able to do, but a businesslike appraisal such as was given in connection with this loan is a method which assures a reasonable chance for the future.

"The fact that this loan in my district was the first loan granted in New Jersey is not accidental. Mr. F. Rene Gossiaux, the Farm Security Administration supervisor, has both his brain and his heart in this work. This agency is trying hard to do a job for our returned soldiers that might well be a model for other agencies of the Government."

Rep. Wickersham, D., Oklahoma, March 8, floor of the House:

Gave a lengthy discussion of applications for FSA loans from veterans in Region VIII, including figures and including a quotation from Mr. Lasseter's statement before Agriculture Subcommittee of House Appropriations Committee. Mr. Wickersham's statement concluded: "Congress should increase the authorization and appropriation immediately."

Rep. Pace, D., Georgia, March 11, House debate on appropriation bill:

"I want to join with the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. Cooley) in commending Mr. Hancock for the splendid job he did as Administrator of Farm Security Administration. I want to go one step further and ask the Members of Congress to get acquainted with the present Administrator, Mr. D. B. Lasseter. He is a man who, in my judgment, measures up to Mr. Hancock's standard; a man who believes in efficiency and economy and will be governed by sound business principles in the administration of farm security. If you do not have an opportunity to go and see him, ask him to come and see you, because I think you should know him. He is the type of man you will like."

Rep. Dirksen, R., Illinois, March 11, House debate on appropriation bill:

"Mr. Chairman, first let me commend my colleague from Minnesota (Rep. H. Carl Andersen) for his zeal in being a constant crusader in the garden of economy. As a general thing, he and I see eye to eye pretty well, and I regret deeply that I cannot go along with him in the amendment now pending to cut the administrative expenses for Farm Security and Rural Rehabilitation from \$24,000,000 to \$23,000,000.

"I believe everyone who is familiar with the record over a good many years will appreciate that I have not been a sugar daddy or a gentle angel for the Farm Security Administration. Many of those present will remember that 11 days after the close of the fiscal year a number of years ago when the then Secretary of Agriculture was in Mexico City we held up the Agriculture Appropriation Bill for that year, and it was being held up because of our controversies over Farm Security.

"I concur in the observation that Farm Security has done an increasingly good job. In those early days they had nearly 20,000 people on the pay roll. They have approximately 9,000 as of this moment, and under the pending bill, which will become effective the first of the fiscal year, we shall have 8,400, or a net reduction of about 600 from their present pay roll. Meanwhile they have been servicing a growing accumulation of loans and collections of all kinds. They have been handling their field work, and many of the men have done a reasonably creditable job.

Rep. Whitten, D., Mississippi, March 11, House debate on appropriation bill:

"...The Farm Security Administration handles loans for people who are unable to obtain loans from other sources; so probably you would say their borrowers were the poorest credit risks. Real attention must be given to the collection of money owed by them. I am one of those who has opposed in the past many of the activities of the Farm Security Administration. I have made many criticisms of some of their programs. Since the advent of Mr. Hancock, former head of the agency and later Mr. Lasseter, we have seen those things we criticized in the program gradually eliminated. We have seen the efforts on the part of these top administrators and those under them and they have cut down personnel and have cut out many of the things in which many of the American people do not believe."

Rep. Mahon, D., Texas, March 21, during House consideration of supplemental appropriation for FSA:

"I was concerned by the fact that while the Senate provided \$25,000,000 in additional loans for the Farm Security Administration, in conference the figure was reduced so that only \$15,000,000 will be available for additional loans by the Farm Security Administration. I had hoped very much that we might agree to the Senate figure of \$25,000,000. May I ask the distinguished chairman of the committee if he believes the \$15,000,000 will be reasonably adequate to meet the demands, particularly the demands of veterans, for loans? I know I have received numerous letters from individual veterans and individual farmers in my home State who are dependent upon Farm Security Administration loans. They were told a few days ago that there is no more money available. I would hate for us to find that the \$15,000,000 provided here is not adequate to meet the most pressing demands."

Rep. Murdock, D., Arizona, March 21, during House debate on bill to slow up liquidation of resettlement projects:

"Mr. Chairman, one of the principal pieces of land involved in this measure is located in the State of Arizona and consists of about 5,000 acres, but these are improved acres. This development happens to be one of the early resettlement projects which the Congress has recently tried to have liquidated. It was not 'my baby,' as it was started before I came to Congress. However, I have always thought this development, the Casa Grande Farms, Inc., near Collidge, Ariz., served a worthy purpose during the days of the great depression. True, it was rather expensive. I do not think well of the type of its organization, as I prefer farmers to acquire title in private ownership. The best that can be said of it is that it helped down-and-outers, who had previously been good farmers, back on their feet and it helped to salvage some human values during the depth of the depression. ..."

Senator Russell, D., Georgia, March 29 in Senate during consideration of Fair Labor Standards Act:

"I know that on occasion the Senator (Mr. Mead of New York) has supported agricultural legislation. I am glad to bear testimony to the fact that he has always been most generous in his support of appropriations for the Farm Security Administration, an activity which has always been very dear to my heart. ..."

Rep. O'Konski, R., Wisconsin, March 29 extension of remarks:

"Mr. Speaker, I regret that the agricultural appropriation bill for the coming year does not provide more money and more liberal regulations for the administration of the Farm Security Administration. I think that it is a sad mistake to sidestep this organization. Their powers should be increased, their loans should be liberalized, and the limit of loans should be increased."

"The Farm Security Administration has done a grand job in my district. To help the veterans its work is needed more now than ever before."

"Mr. Speaker, to give an idea of how important the work of this agency is, I want to include in the record what this agency has accomplished in my district. A glance at the record more than proves its worth. Why are we slighting this agency while at the same time we are squandering billions abroad?" Tables followed showing loans, active and collection-only borrowers, paid up families, cumulative amount loaned and collected, Tenth Congressional District of Wisconsin.

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4 - What Congressmen Say About FSA

Rep. Lyndon B. Johnson, D., Texas, April 3, speech in the House on "Public Employees of Austin, Texas:"

"Mr. Speaker, in Austin, Tex., the largest city in my district, we have as fine a group of public employees--city, State and Federal--as you will find in this Nation. ...There are dozens of other offices in Austin manned by the same pleasant, friendly, efficient public employees. The agricultural offices such as the Farm Security Administration, and the Commodity Credit Corporation. Civil employees who keep the wheels turning at our Army Air Transport Training Center, Bergstrom Field. ...Whenever any department of the Government makes an outstanding achievement, it is the boss who gets the credit--the Cabinet member or the Administrator. But the little people do the work and they, too, deserve recognition. Without them, it would have been impossible to make this into the finest Nation on the face of the earth..."

Rep. Flannagan, D., Virginia, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

"Mr. Chairman, the farm-security program, if rightly administered, and under the provisions of the bill we bring to you the proper safeguards have been set up, is in my opinion the greatest farm program ever inaugurated in America. For the benefit of those who may think I am a little reckless in my assertion, let me give my reason for my broad statement. It is the greatest farm program ever inaugurated because it anchors men to the land. The most malignant, cancerous growth on our Republic is the floating, shiftless sharecropper and tenant who, having no interest in the land other than to eke out a bare existence, from year to year recklessly mines from the soil its substance and strength until at last it becomes an eroded and barren waste.

"Under the farm-security program, where rightly administered, I have witnessed with my own eyes a wonderful transformation. I have seen the floating, shiftless tenant and sharecropper, rehabilitated under the farm-security program, become through land ownership not only a lover of the land but a guardian of the soil. I have seen him under the program taken off the relief rolls and placed upon a farm, thus stepping from an object of pity and a public charge, necessarily a position so humiliating as to crush his spirit, to the proud position of landowner and taxpayer. ..."

Rep. Vursell, R., Illinois, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

"...Through the aid extended by the Government, through FSA, many industrious tenant farmers have embraced the opportunity of becoming farm owners. Though a great amount of money has been loaned to help such farmers, the losses have been very small. ...This bill should, and I am sure will, be passed by this House by a substantial majority. This is the first application of reconversion which has been applied to the farmer.

Rep. Rizley, R., Oklahoma, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

"I think the FSA program has proven itself it is a good program for the man who wants a family-sized farm. As a member of the minority party, if I remember correctly, in many of our party platforms we stressed the necessity of family-sized farms, and while I do not always subscribe to everything they put in platforms, I want to point out that we have constantly as a party advocated family-sized farms as being sound basic agriculture. ...I am convinced that the FSA program is the one program that will give to this country family-sized farms. ...It is a return to the homestead conception of American agriculture. The program is here to stay, and the only question remaining is whether or not we shall operate Farm Security from year to year by Executive order and Executive decree, or whether we shall give it a permanent status under basic law."

Rep. Abernethy, D., Mississippi, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

"...As it (FSA) is now operating under new personnel of sound thinking, it is performing a very fine service to our small farmers."

Rep. Hays, D., Arkansas, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

"...The time has come for Congress to assert itself and to recognize the tremendous social and economic significance of what has been done by the Farm Security Administration through the help of Congress through the years. Farm Security has come of age.

"There is a story of a little school in my district. The teacher said, 'Who is President of the United States?' No one knew. Finally one little fellow, in the back of the room timidly held up his hand and the teacher said, 'Johnny, can you tell us who the President is?' He said, 'Miss Watkins, I

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...the Government has been responsible to make the time... the work and they... credit--the... the Government makes an outstanding achievement... the Government makes an outstanding achievement... the Government makes an outstanding achievement...

Rep. Thompson, D., Virginia, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

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Rep. Keenan, R., Illinois, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

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Rep. Hinkle, R., Oklahoma, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

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do not know who is the President, but Mr. Hanna is the Farm Security supervisor.' To me, that incident is revealing. It represents an important force in many rural sections of this country where the Farm Security Administration provides the only contact that some families have with their Government. It is to put our congressional approval on the procedures designed to admit or to readmit hundreds of thousands of farmers to a firmer place in our economic life that we are engaged in the passage of this legislation."

Rep. Murray, R., Wisconsin, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

"...Remember, people anywhere in history have not been interested in 'ism' when they owned and operated a tract of their own land. ..."

"The future of this legislation depends entirely upon the administration of its provisions. The Farm Security has many, many agricultural trained employees. Many of these employees have been with the Federal land bank. ...Let us appreciate the fact that they way to help the tenant farmer is by giving him a chance to own a farm and then see to it that he gets an income both hourly and annually that is on equal terms with all other groups of our Nation. ..."

Rep. Cooley, D., North Carolina, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

"...For more than 10 years the Farm Security Administration has been permitted to operate as an agency of the executive branch of the Government. ...Congress has been severely criticized for failing to provide legislative authority for the Farm Security Administration. Frankly, Congress has been responsible for many of the ills and evils of the Farm Security Administration for the reason that we have failed to provide the agency with a charter to place upon it desirable and definite limitations. ..."

Rep. Voorhis, D., California, April 9 during debate on Cooley bill:

"...we have through the years been permitting a program under the Farm Security Administration to go forward. I have supported it earnestly...I happen to believe that the rehabilitation loans are very important. They might better called production loans, for I think that is what they really are. Every single study of the problems of American agriculture that I have read in recent years--and I have read a good many of them--has emphasized the fact that one of the answers to our problem had to be to enable that large group, about half of the farmers of this country, who actually produce only about 20 percent of the commercial crops that are sold, to enable that one-half of our farmers to have a better basis for success in their farmsteads and in their livestock and in their equipment than they have heretofore been able to have. ..."

Rep. Hope, R., Kansas, Rep. Hall, R., New York, and Rep. Zimmerman, D., Missouri, opposed the attempt to lower the limitations on amounts of rehabilitation loans.

Senator Langer, R., North Dakota, April 10, floor of the Senate:

Received consent to insert in the Record a resolution adopted March 19 by Devils Lake, N. D., Chamber of Commerce favoring continuation of FSA. The resolution pointed out that loan funds were virtually depleted and asked for further appropriation.

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